

Testimony of William W. Rumley
Before the Select Committee on Aging
on
RB 6540 An Act Concerning Prescription Eye Drop Refills
March 3, 2009

Good Afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Serra and other distinguished members of this Committee. My name is William Rumley. I am here today representing people such as myself who have to use prescription eye drops to control an eye disease to prevent blindness, and to let you know that RB 6540, An Act Concerning Prescription Eye Drop Refills, will go a long way toward helping patients such as myself do this.

For the record, I should tell you that I am a veteran and that I receive my medications from the Veterans Administration Hospital in Newington, usually, but not always in a three-month supply by mail. I agreed to talk to you about this after my ophthalmologist, Dr. David Emmel, listened to my complaints about how hard it is to get every drop to hit your eye and how anxiety provoking it is when you suddenly discover you are almost out of medicine and might not be able to get your eye drops in time.

These eye drop bottles are very small, and a lot of the bottle is covered with a label. The one I use, Travatan-Z, comes in a white plastic bottle and if you shake it you can sort of tell if it is mostly full or almost empty, but it is hard to be sure this way. If you hold the bottle up to the light at an angle and look very carefully you can see a faint grey line. But sometimes, when it appears that there is still medicine in the bottle, and I turn the bottle upside down nothing comes out, or maybe just a bubble comes out. Other times, when the bottle is full, and I turn it upside down two drops come out instead of just one. Sometimes I squeeze out a drop and it misses my eye and then I have to repeat the whole process to be sure my eye is properly treated.

At times I think I have enough drops to last me until my next supply arrives; it usually takes ten days from the time I order it, and then I realize I don't have enough medicine in the bottle to carry me all the way and I get anxious and I have to call the VA Hospital and cancel the mail order and then drive down to pick up one bottle when I would really prefer to have the three-month supply.

My point is that it is not easy to be sure that every drop in the bottle actually gets into your eye and it is not easy to be sure you have enough medicine in the bottle to last the time it is supposed to, and that I spend too much time worrying about my eye drops and going blind. I understand that this bill, RB 6540, would make it easier for people like me to not have to worry so much about this sort of thing.

Thank you for your time. I would be glad to answer any of your questions.